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INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION TO ADDRESS AND MITIGATE THE
CONSEQUENCES OF THE ACCIDENT AT THE CHERNOBYL NUCLEAR POWER PLANT

(Commission decision C (46))

Report by the Executive Secretary

1. This report is prepared in accordance with paragraph 4 of decision C (46) and contains an account of the Commission's activities in this field since the forty-sixth session.
2. In response to the request received in 1990 and 1991 from the Governments of the former USSR, Byelorussian SSR and Ukrainian SSR, a number of ECE subsidiary bodies have considered proposals for, and implemented activities relating to the Chernobyl accident, as set out below. Other possible areas of work are under consideration.
3. Under the auspices of the Committee on Human Settlements, the Workshop on Resettlement of Population as a Result of the Chernobyl Accident was held in Minsk (Belarus) from 4 to 6 December 1991. The Workshop invited the Committee to continue assistance to Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine by developing new principles, methods of planning and design, as well as by providing technical expertise to projects elaborated by local experts.

4. The Working Party on the Chemical Industry is engaged in obtaining and providing information concerning the decontamination of radioactive wastes and soil and the treatment of radioactive waste water, as well as concerning research institutes active in these areas. To date, information has been received from Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Romania and Turkey, and two reports have been received from the United States Environmental Protection Agency, entitled "Technological Approaches to the Cleanup of Radiologically Contaminated Superfund Sites" and "Assessment of Technologies for the Remediation of Radioactively Contaminated Superfund Sites". A report on the information received was submitted to the Working Party in October 1991. It took note of the report and expressed satisfaction with the work carried out with regard to the mitigation of the consequences of the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant and agreed that the secretariat should continue its activities in this field.

5. At the request of the Committee on Agriculture (March 1991) the secretariat asked member countries for information related to their experience with respect to accidents from nuclear power stations and their impact on agricultural production. So far, such information has been received from Finland, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom, the former USSR and Yugoslavia, as well as from the Joint FAO/IAEA Division on Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture and the Commission of the European Communities. The Government of Belarus has expressed readiness to organize a workshop on this subject in 1992.

6. In response to a proposal made in 1990 by the former Ukrainian SSR on behalf of itself and the former USSR and Byelorussian SSR, the Timber Committee included work designed to mitigate the consequences of the Chernobyl accident in the priorities of its programme of work. A team of experts will meet at Gomel (Belarus) in March 1992 to assess the present state of knowledge about the impact of the accident on the forestry and forest industry sector and to draw up proposals for consideration by the Joint FAO/ECE/ILO Committee on Forest Technology, Management and Training in September 1992.

7. The Working Party on Engineering Industries and Automation has assisted the Government of Belarus in launching a project aimed at developing a system for automated measurement of radionuclide content in primary and processed food products. A progress report will be considered by the Working Party in February 1993.

8. The Conference of European Statisticians agreed in 1991 to include in the Compendium of Environment Statistics a study on the radiation situation in the former USSR after the accident at Chernobyl.

9. The secretariat has maintained close cooperation with the United Nations Coordinator for international cooperation to the regions affected by the accident appointed by the Secretary-General in March 1991 in accordance with General Assembly resolution 45/190. It has also participated in the Inter-Agency Task Force established under the terms of the same resolution. The secretariat formed part of the mission which the Coordinator led to the affected regions on the occasion of the fifth anniversary of the accident on 26 April 1991.

10. The secretariat also participated actively in the preparation of the Chernobyl Pledging Conference held on 20 September 1991 in conjunction with the opening of the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly. In this context it participated in consultations between the Inter-Agency Task Force and the national Chernobyl committees on the preparation of the Joint Plan elaborated in June 1991 by the Governments of the former USSR, Byelorussian SSR, Ukrainian SSR and Russian SFSR and submitted to the Pledging Conference.

11. The United Nations Coordinator has regularly informed the ECE of the status of the Chernobyl Trust Fund and of her consultations with government representatives of the affected regions as to the use of available funds, ongoing fund-raising activities, as well as steps to adjust the Joint Plan to new circumstances which prevail in the affected regions of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine.

12. At its second regular session in July 1991 the Economic and Social Council considered the Secretary-General's report on activities undertaken to implement Assembly resolution 45/190 and adopted resolution 1991/51 which, inter alia, welcomed the practical measures taken to coordinate the activities of the organs, organizations and programmes of the United Nations system as well as to facilitate the elaboration of the Joint Plan, and requested the Secretary-General and the Coordinator to continue to take measures to implement resolution 45/190.

13. At its forty-sixth session the General Assembly adopted resolution 46/150 on strengthening of international cooperation and coordination of efforts to study, mitigate and minimize the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster, in which it welcomed the practical measures taken by the Secretary-General and the Coordinator including the setting up of the Inter-Agency Task Force and the preparation of the Joint Plan. It also noted with appreciation the results of the Pledging Conference and requested all programmes of the United Nations to continue the consideration of possible technical and other specialized assistance and specific actions in the areas most affected by the accident, in close cooperation with the Coordinator.